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THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINA'S POPULATION,
1949 - 1984:
A GEOGRAPHIC APPRAISAL

BY

WU-JIAN ZHU

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree Master of Science, Major in
Geography, South Dakota
State University
1987

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINA'S POPULATION, 1949 - 1984:
A GEOGRAPHIC APPRAISAL

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Charles F. Gritzner
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem and Objectives

China is the world's most populated country. With more than one billion people, it accounts for about one-fourth of the world's population. No world summary of population trends is complete without the inclusion of China. Additionally, China occupies approximately 3.7 million square miles, which is nearly one-fifteenth of the world's land area, making the country the third largest in the world. Additionally, China is a possible model for other countries to follow in medical and birth planning work.

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China (1949), the country has experienced a remarkable demographic transition. Many geographers and demographers are interested in studying China's population. Population data come from various sources, including official population censuses, newspapers, which gave a different figures in their articles, and various reports. ✓ These different data affect the accuracy of conclusions about China's population. In this study, the author has tried to cite the official population statistics published by the State Statistical Bureau in ✓ order to provide the data base for more accurate conclusions. Most

data cited in this study are obtained from the Statistical Yearbook Of China published in different years. The book, publishes accurate and systematic population statistics of China.

This study deals with both the spatial and temporal aspects of population research, and falls within the geographic sub-field of population geography. The objective of this study is to examine the population situation in China from 1949 to 1984 in a geographical context. Specifically, it is to analyze changes in the geographical distribution of population and trends in population growth in China from 1949 to 1984 including urban-rural contrasts.

Limitations of the Study

The reader should be aware of certain limitations to this study. First, the study excludes Taiwan Province (Republic of China), because of its politically disputed status.

Second, it is difficult to examine the population situation for each province due to the lack of data in such a large country with 29 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities.¹ The emphasis, therefore, in this study is to determine and analyze the features of population geography in China as a whole, with secondary reference to regional demographic patterns and trends.

Finally, the study is limited to the period between 1949 to 1984. The main reason for this time limit is that the People's Republic of China was established in October 1949. The social system was totally changed from that which existed before 1949; additionally, population statistics are available in a systematical way after 1949.

Review of Literature

The literature pertaining to China's population is great in number. Most of the works, however, were written in a demographic rather than geographic context. Many articles emphasize an analysis of changes in the vital rate and growth of population in a temporal framework. Only a few works deal with the distribution and trends in population growth on a regional basis. This study attempts to fill an existing void in the study of China's population geography in spatial framework.

The Current Vital Rates and Population Size of the People's Republic of China and its Province, is a doctoral dissertation in demography, written by Judith Banister. The author compiles most of the publicly available population data from the People's Republic of China from the 1950s to the mid-1970s. The degree of accuracy on rates of fertility, mortality, population size is discussed. The book gives the reader a good picture of the mortality and fertility situation in China as a whole, as well as on a provincial basis.

Essays on China's Population Distribution is an excellent book for the study of China's population geography. The author, Huan-yong Hu, is a famous population geographer in China. The book consists of a variety of topics covering China's population geography and population density in some selected provinces. The first six essays were written between 1934 and 1936.

One of essays in the book, titled "A Brief Survey of China's Population Geography, 1982," summarizes recent changes in population dynamics in China with particular reference to changes in spatial distribution. It also describes selected demographic characteristics, including sex, age, urban and rural population, occupation, and nationality. This is the only book that well describes and analyzes the features of population distribution. In the author's estimation, it is the most valuable book on China's population geography.

Many articles discuss the trends in population growth, size, and policies. These aspects of population study have been well studied by many scholars.

"Growth and Control of Population in China: the Urban-Rural Contrast," written by Mei-ling Hsu, examines the urban-rural contrasts in demographic and marital behavior, rates of growth, and implementation of the one child policy. This article is useful in urban and rural population study.

"China: Demographic Billionaire," by Yuan H. Tien, reviewed population trends and policies, and analyzed the family planning program and its relationship to the decline in the birth rate. The data which he cited came from the State Statistical Bureau and some articles.

Organization

This study of China's population is composed of four chapters. In Chapter I, the problem and the objectives of the study, and limitations have been discussed.

Chapter II introduces a general demographic situation of China. It includes population size and population composition. This section is a brief description of China's population.

Chapter III examines the regional distribution of population and urban-rural distribution. It analyzes the factors which influenced the distribution of population. The Chapter identifies the problem in a spatial framework.

Chapter IV traces the growth of population from 1949 to 1984. It gives a detailed description and analysis of the rapid increase in China's population both in the spatial and temporal framework.

END NOTES

1. The population statistics by provinces in each year are not available.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION

Population Size

China is a developing country with the largest population in the world. According to 1983 data, the country's total population is 1,024,950,000 (the population in Taiwan Province, Jinmen, Mazu and a few other islands, Hong Kong and Macao regions is not included for the time being).¹

After 1949, because of improvements in the people's standard of living and health conditions, the death rate declined greatly. Meanwhile, without proper control of the population growth due to the traditional ideas of childbearing, the birth rate increased. The population growth is characterized by a high birth rate, low mortality rate and high natural increase rate. The average annual natural increase rate before 1973 was over 20 per thousand except for 1958 to 1961. The total population increased to 892 million in 1973 from 552 million in 1950, an increase of 61.59 percent; that is, again of 340 million in 23 years.² Since 1971, due to family planning work, the birth rate has dropped markedly and the death rate

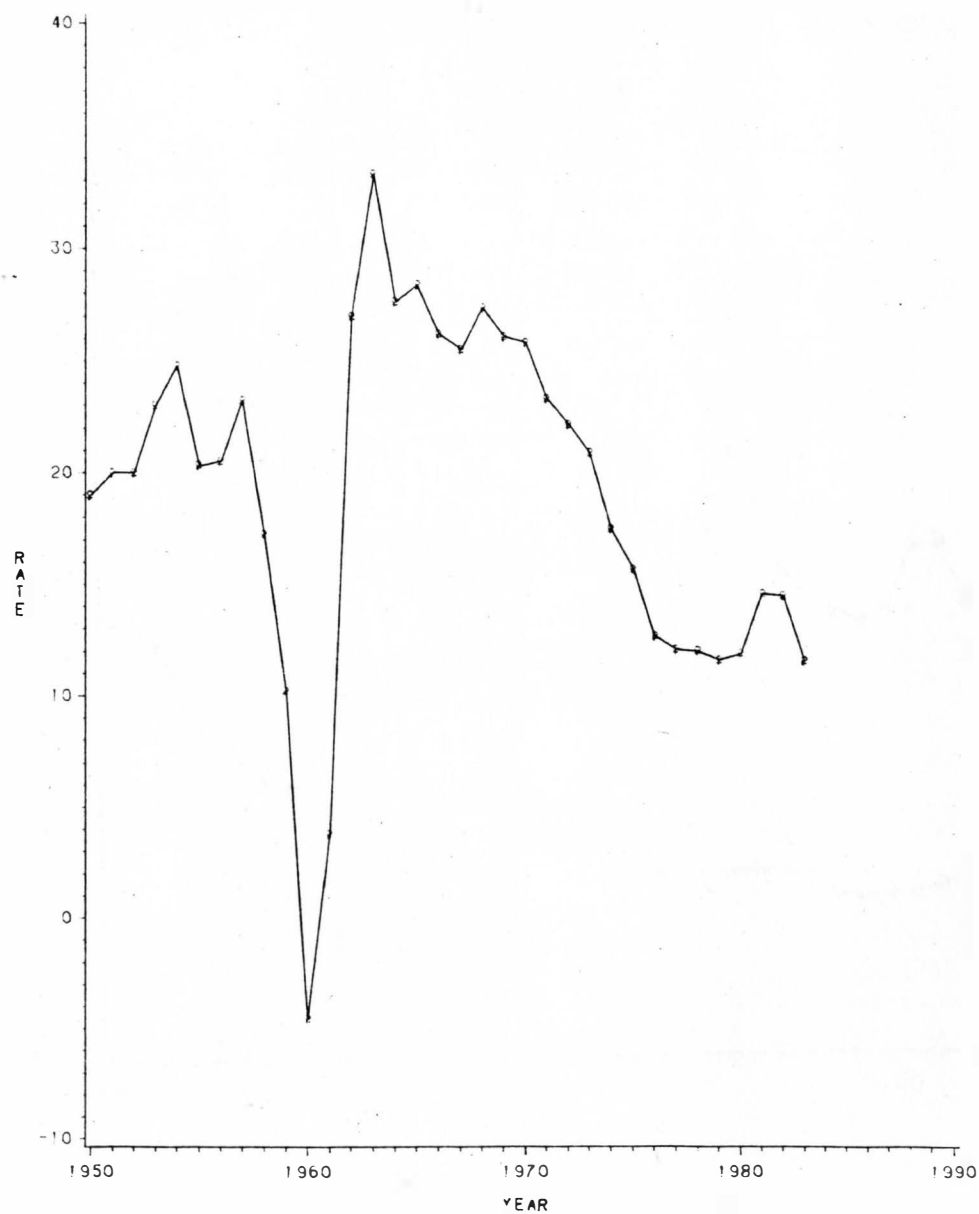
also has declined somewhat. In 1983, birth rates decreased to 18.62 per thousand, death rates 7.08 per thousand, and natural increase rates 11.54 per thousand (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The population is in a transition toward a pattern of a low number of births and deaths relative to population size. Due to the sharp increase in population before the 1970s, however, the population structure became dominated by a large base at a young age (Figure 3). At present, the people at or under the age of thirty account for 64.44 percent of the total population, with a median age of 22.9 years. About 11 million young couples will reach the age of marriage and childbearing annually in the remaining years of the century.³ China's present demographic situation has made it a necessary and urgent task to control its population growth.

Population Composition

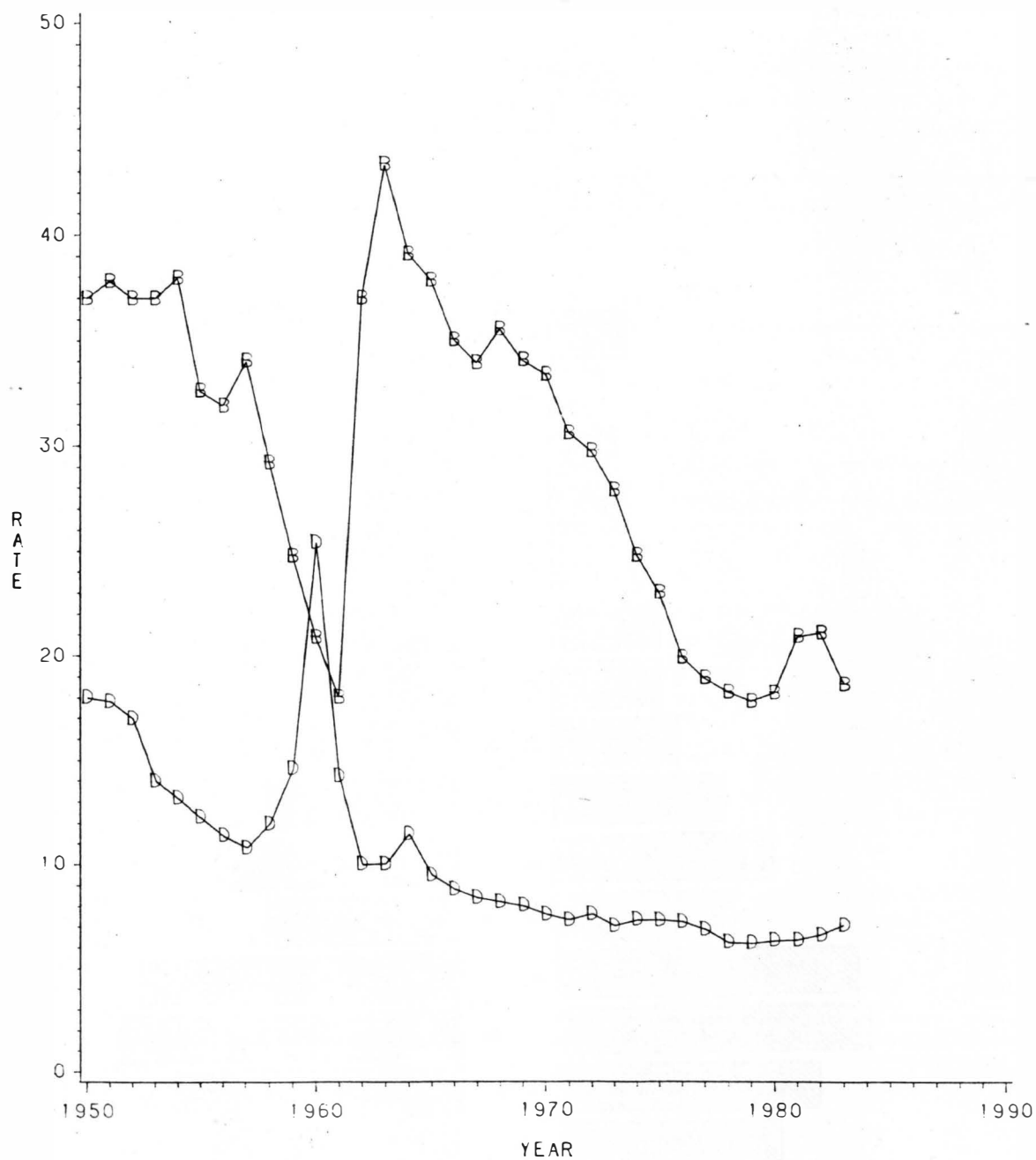
The discussion on population composition will deal with sex composition, age structure, nationalities and urban and rural composition since 1949.

1. The sex composition

According to 1983 statistics, China showed an average of over 106 males per 100 females. This sex-ratio for male and female population includes the entire country including the various provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions (Table 1). With a



RATE: PER THOUSAND
FIGURE 1. NATURAL INCREASE RATE IN CHINA



RATE: PER THOUSAND

B = BIRTH RATE D = DEATH RATE

FIGURE 2. VITAL STATISTICS IN CHINA

TABLE 1
THE SEX COMPONENTS IN CHINA, 1983

REGIONS	TOTAL	SEX-RATIOS	RANKS
	POPULATION (MILLION)		OF SEX-RATIO
THE COUNTRY'S TOTAL	1024.95	106.5	
BEIJING	9.34	103.5	21
TIANJIN	7.89	103.4	22
HEBEI	54.20	105.1	15
SHANXI	25.72	109.8	1
NEI MONGGOL	19.55	109.5	2
LIAONING	36.29	104.3	19
JILING	22.70	105.1	15
HEILONGJIANG	33.06	104.8	17
SHANGHAI	11.94	100.0	24
JIANGSU	61.35	103.6	20
ZHEJIANG	39.63	107.8	6
ANHUI	50.56	108.1	5
FUJIAN	26.40	106.6	10
JIANGXI	33.84	106.7	9
SHANDONG	75.64	103.5	21
HENAN	75.91	104.6	18

Cont.

REGIONS	TOTAL	SEX-RATIOS	RANKS
	POPULATION (MILLION)		OF SEX-RATIO
HUBEI	48.35	105.7	13
HUNAN	55.09	108.3	4
GUANGDONG	60.75	105.4	14
GUANGXI	37.33	107.0	8
SICHUAN	100.76	106.6	10
GUIZHOU	29.01	104.9	16
YUNNAN	33.19	102.1	23
TIBET	1.93	94.9	25
SHAANXI	29.31	108.5	3
GANSU	19.88	107.1	7
QINGHAI	3.93	105.8	12
NINGXIA	3.98	106.2	11
XINJIANG	13.18	104.3	19

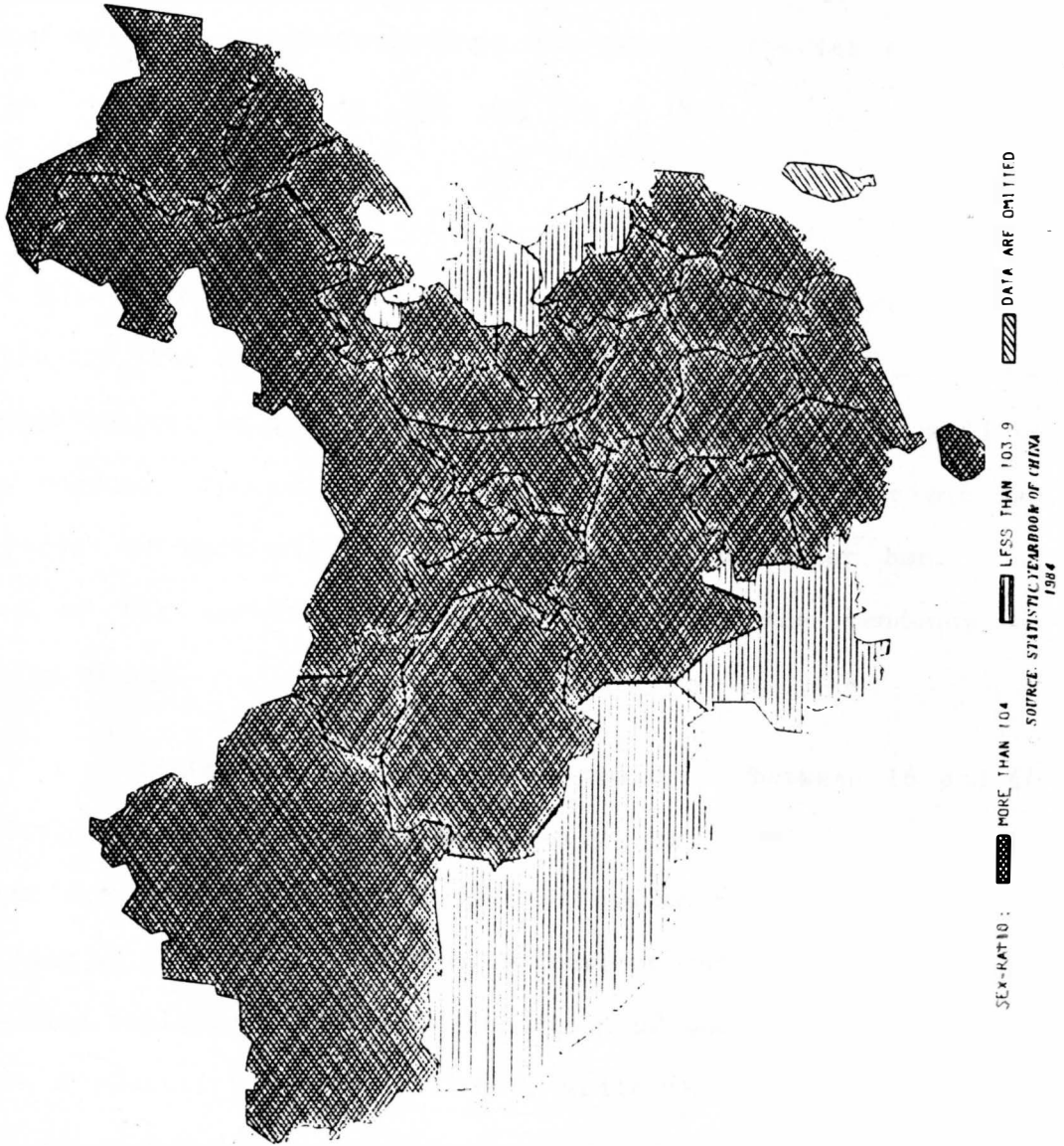
Source: Statistical Yearbook of China, 1984.

few exceptions, the ratio of sex components in the population is more or less the same.

Among the various provinces and regions, Shanxi and Inner Mongolia have a relatively higher sex-ratio of male and the female population. This situation has existed in these two provinces for a long time. For example, the 1953 census disclosed sex-ratios of 112.5 and 128.6 respectively in Shanxi and Inner Mongolia.⁴ These two provinces are important centers of heavy industry in China. Between 1950-1960, many male labors migrated to these two regions in order to construct coal mines in Shanxi and a steel industry in Inner Mongolia. In recent years, the sex-ratios in these two provinces have dropped rapidly, especially in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region where it decreased from 128.6 in 1953 to 109.5 in 1983. There is a similar sex-ratio of male and female in Shanghai in 1983. The female population in Tibet is larger than the male. That is because Tibet has a lower sex ratio at birth, high infant deaths, and historical reasons. With the exception of Tibet and Shanghai, Yunan, Tianjing, Beijing, Shandong and Jiangsu provinces have lower sex-ratios than other provinces and autonomous regions. The distribution of sex-ratios in China is shown on Map 1.

Large cities usually had higher sex-ratios in the past. For example, in the 1953 census figures Beijing had 136.5, Tianjing 122.0, and Shanghai 115.1⁵. These three municipalities have lower sex-ratios regions after thirty years.

MAP 1
DISTRIBUTION OF SEX-RATIO BY PROVINCES IN CHINA
1983



In China, females are always outnumbered by males. This feature of the sex composition has maintained for a long time. One possible reason is that in some rural parts of the country, female infanticide is still practiced. Another is that the sex ratio--the number of males per females--is high. For example, the sex ration was 109.6 in 1946, nearly 106 in 1953, and 106 in 1983.⁶

2. The age composition

With reference to the age structure of the population in a given country, the society will be short of labor force if there are not enough adults. In addition, supporting the old and young will be a heavy burden. The adult labor force will prove insufficient and their burden of work will be quite heavy. On the other hand, the presence of big numbers of juveniles indicates the tendency of population growth.

If we define the age under 15 as children, between 16 and 64 as adults, and those over 64 as elderly, the ratio between the different age groups in China is quite close to the world averages: adults make up 61 percent, children 34 percent and elderly 5 percent in 1984 (see Table 2). The high proportion of adults indicates that there is a plentiful source of labor, while the low proportion of children and old people shows that the adults do not have to shoulder too heavy a burden in supporting them. Since the previous census in 1964, the proportion of China's population below age 15 has dropped

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGES OF AGE GROUPS IN THE POPULATION FOR 1983

In	Under 15	15-64	Over 64
THE WHOLE WORLD	35	59	6
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES	23	65	12
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	38	58	4
CHINA	34	61	5

Source: 1984 Population Reference Bureau Data Sheet.

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGES OF AGE GROUPS IN 1953, 1964 AND 1982

TIME	UNDER 15	15-64	OVER 64
June 30, 1953	36.3	59.3	4.4
June 30, 1964	40.7	55.7	3.6
June 30, 1982	33.6	61.5	4.9

Source: An Ma and Rui-chuan Cha, "Some Analyses of China's Population Conditions", Population Research, No. 3, 1984, pp.24-37.

from 40.7 percent to 33.6; however, the population over age 64 has increased from 3.6 percent to 4.9 (Table 3). The age structure of China today presents a change from a younger to an aging pattern.

The age-sex structure for 1982, available from a computer tabulation of a 10-percent sample of the population, reveals much about China's demographic past and future. This age pyramid (Figure 3) shows two indentations and gives an accurate, unmistakable record of the evolution of China's population in the last half century. The first indentation near the 20 year olds points to the impact of natural disasters in the three years from 1959 to 1961.⁷ The second indentation found on the lower part of the age-pyramid shows a period of high growth before 1971. Since 1973, however, the government has stressed the extreme importance of family planning and has adopted strenuous measures to regulate population growth, so the base of the pyramid shows a sharp indentation. This age pyramid also shows a trend in the demographic transition toward a pattern of gradual decline.

3. Nationalities

China is a unified multi-national country. Besides the Han nationality, there are 55 ethnic groups in China, distinguishable by language, custom, religion, and historical and cultural background. According to the 1982 census, China has 936.7 million Han people, or 93.3 percent of the total population. The population of the other 55

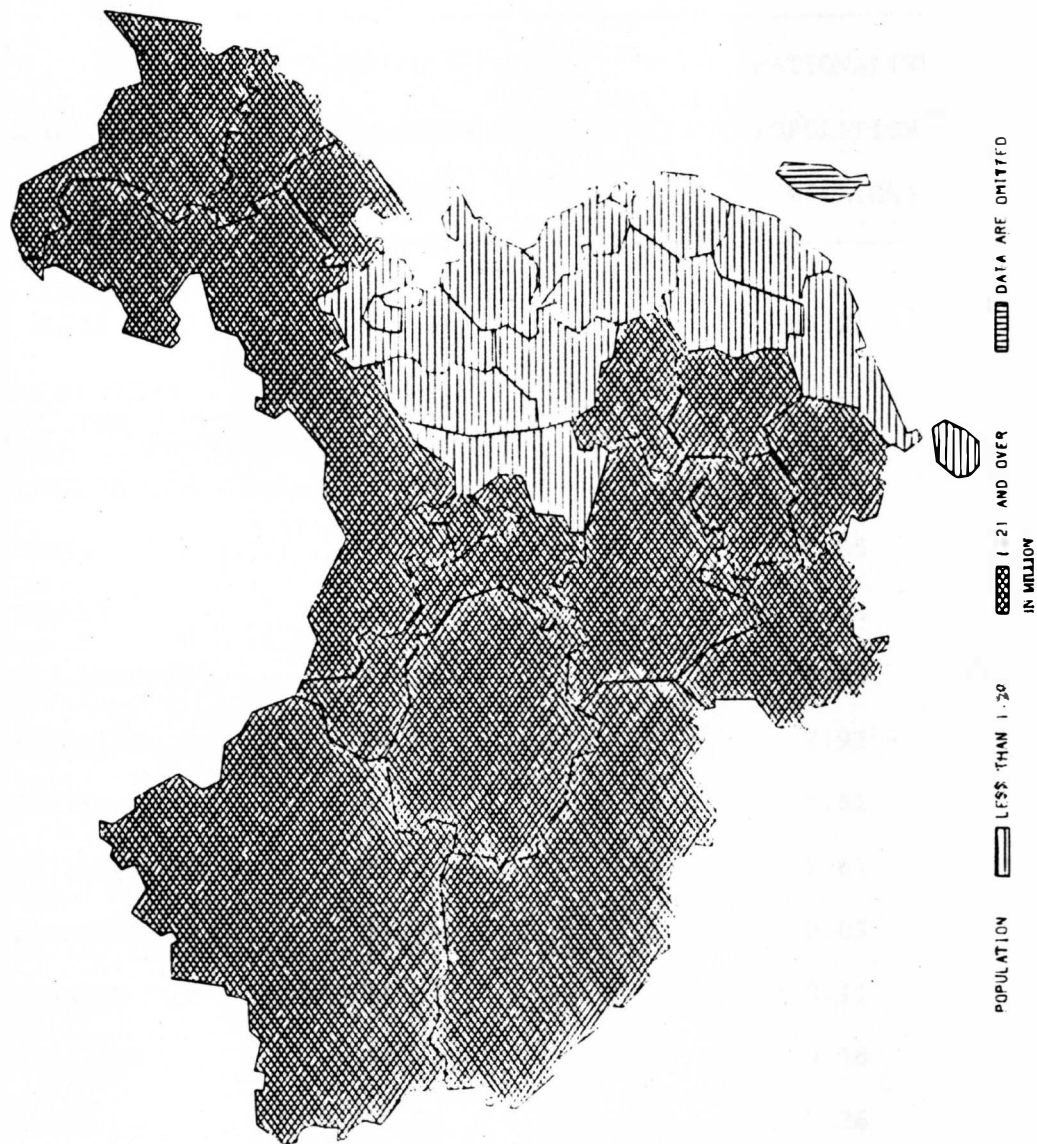
ethnic minority groups adds up to 67.23 million, or 6.7 percent of China's population.

Minority areas have been given autonomous status. There are five Autonomous regions in China, where people of minority nationalities live in compact communities. In these areas organs of self-government are established for exercise of the right of autonomy.

Although the minority nationalities are fewer in number, they inhabit about 62.5 percent of China's territory. At present, every province and city, and also over 70 percent of the counties, have minority inhabitants, while in the minority-concentrated regions are spread vast numbers of the Han people. Many different nationalities live mingled together in some areas. A characteristic feature of the distribution of China's various nationalities is that, with the Han nationality as the center and while the various nationalities live in compact communities locally, they intermingle completely on a national scale.

China's total population and the minority nationalities in each province or autonomous region based on the 1982 census are shown in Table 4. The autonomous regions of Inner Mongolia, Xinjian, Tibet, Guangxi and Ningxia, and the provinces of Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan, Hubei, Liaoning, Jiling, and Heilongjiang represent the largest number of minority nationalities.

MAP 2
DISTRIBUTION OF THE MINORITY NATIONALITIES IN CHINA
1992



SOURCE: THE 1992 CENSUS

TABLE 4
THE NATIONALITY OF POPULATION, 1982

REGIONS	TOTAL POPULATION (MILLION)	NATIONALITY POPULATION (MILLION)
THE COUNTRY'S TOTAL	1024.95	67.23
BEIJING	9.34	0.32
TIANJIN	7.89	0.16
HEBEI	54.20	0.85
SHANXI	25.72	0.06
NEI MONGGOL	19.55	3.00
LIAONING	36.29	2.91
JILIN	22.70	1.82
HEILONGJIANG	33.06	1.61
SHANGHAI	11.94	0.05
JIANGSU	61.35	0.11
ZHEJIANG	39.63	0.16
ANHUI	50.56	0.26
FUJIAN	26.40	0.25
JIANGXI	33.84	0.02
SHANDONG	75.64	0.41
HENAN	75.91	0.80

Cont.

REGIONS	TOTAL POPULATION (MILLION)	NATIONALITY POPULATION (MILLION)
<hr/>		
HUBEI	48.35	1.78
HUNAN	55.09	2.19
GUANGDONG	60.75	1.06
GUANGXI	37.33	13.93
SICHUAN	100.76	3.66
GUIZHOU	29.01	7.42
YUNNAN	33.19	10.31
TIBET	1.93	1.81
SHAANXI	29.31	0.13
GANSU	19.88	1.55
QINGHAI	3.93	1.54
NINGXIA	3.98	1.24
XINJIANG	13.18	7.80

Source: Based on the Census of 1982.

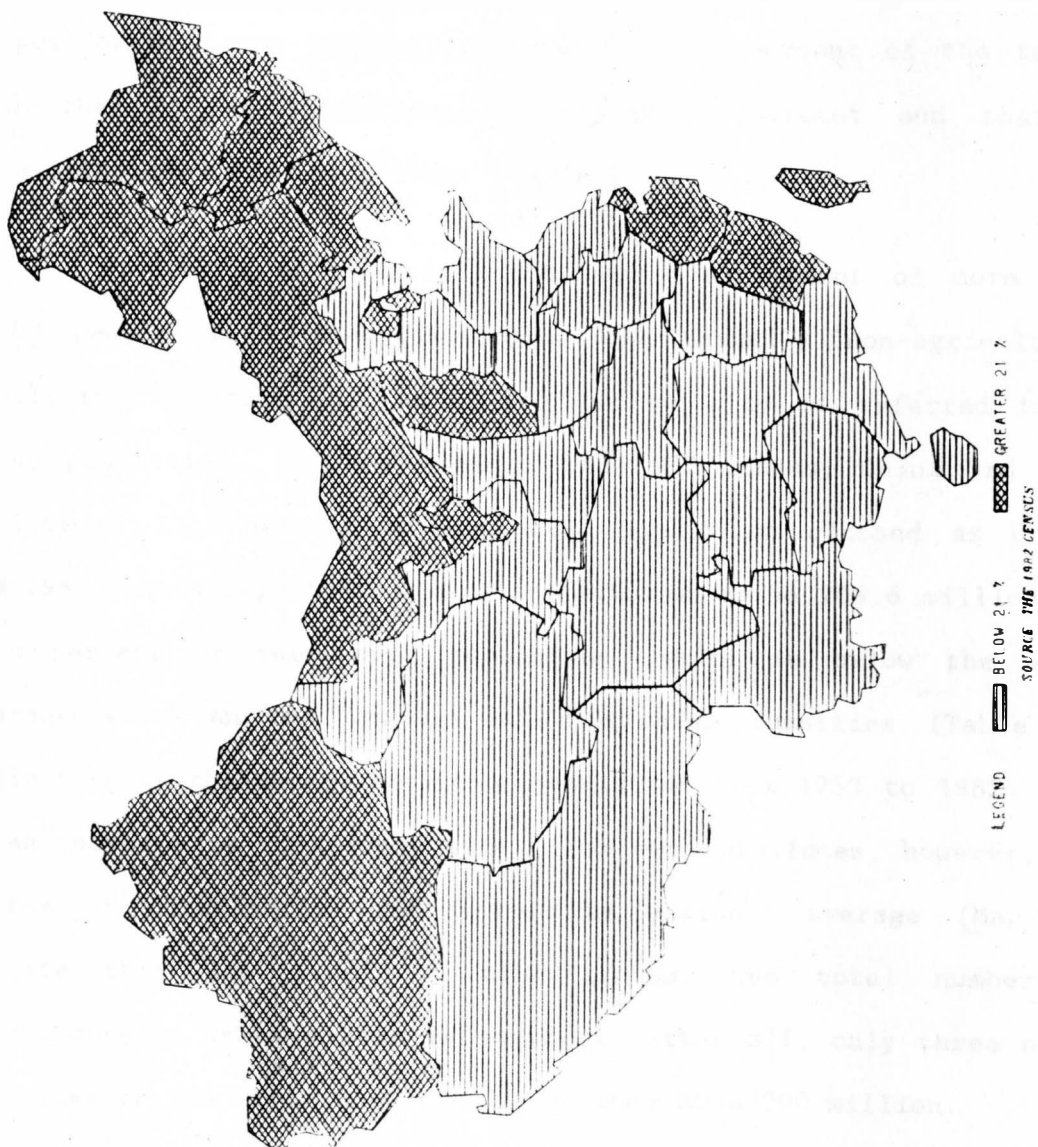
These provinces and autonomous regions are shown on Map 2. It reveals that most of the minority nationalities inhabit vast areas in western and northern china.

The proportion of minority nationalities within the population of China has increased somewhat. Based on 1982 census data, the population of the Han nationality in the 29 provinces municipalities, and autonomous regions totals 936.7 million, representing 93.3 percent of the total population. The population of the minority nationalities is 67.23 million, or 6.7 percent of the total. In the 1964 census, the Han population was 654.6 million and that of the other nationalities 40.0 million. The minority growth rate of 68.1 percent since 1964 was much higher than the Han increase rate of 43.1 percent.

Three reasons have been offered to explain the higher minority growth rate. Firstly the standard of living and health conditions of the minority nationalities has improved greatly since 1949. The rates of death have declined and the rates of birth have increased rapidly. So the rate of natural increase has risen. Second, the state has been more lenient toward the minority nationalities in regard to family planning. Finally, some minority persons who did not identify themselves as such in the previous censuses did so in the 1982 counting.

4. Urban and Rural Population

MAP 3
DEGREE OF URBANIZATION BY PROVINCES IN CHINA
1982



For the last hundred years, the populations of developed countries have been increasing constantly in cities and towns and declining steadily in the countryside. According to 1984 United Nation's data on the world's population, the world's average proportion of urban population amounts to 40 percent of the total, with that of developed countries being 71 percent and that of developing countries 32 percent (Table 5).

In China, we generally consider a settlement of more than 2,000 people as a town; sometimes the actually non-agricultural population in areas designated as town or city is referred to as urban population. At the time of the 1953 census, China had 77.3 million or 13.2 percent of its total population classed as urban. The 1982 census reported the urban population to be 206.6 million, or 20.6 percent of the total population, which is below the world average and even the average of developing countries (Table 5). Table 6 shows the change of urban population from 1953 to 1982. The urban increase is relatively slow. For most provinces, however, the degree of urbanization was below the national average (Map 3). Despite this low level of urbanization, the total number of inhabitants in urban places is enormous. After all, only three other countries in the world have population more than 200 million.

In China agriculture has always been the leading branch of the national economy. Peasantry makes up the overwhelming majority of the country's population. The lower percentage of urban population

TABLE 5
PERCENTAGES OF URBAN POPULATION IN 1983

IN	PERCENTAGES OF URBAN POPULATION
THE WHOLE WORLD	40
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES	71
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	36
CHINA	21

Source: 1984 Population Reference Bureau Data Sheet.

TABLE 6

URBAN POPULATION IN CHINA 1953 TO 1982

Year	Urban (city and town) population (1,000)	Percent of total Population
1953	77,257	13.2
1964	127,103	18.4
1978	167,164	20.0
1982	206,589	20.6

Source: Mei-ling Hsu, "Growth and Control of Population in China: The Urban-rural Contrast," Annals Of AGG, Vol.75, No.2, June 1985, p. 243.

is closely related to the country's low economic level. Industry is not well developed, a factor that accounts for its small proportion of urban population. Meanwhile, it is explained by the fact that China's government maintains strict control over the growth of the urban population and has adopted measures to restrict the flow of rural population into cities. It is especially a consequence of the fact that the government has actively developed a diversified economy and some small-scale industries in the rural areas.

The urban-rural structure is formed by the Chinese government. The major feature in urban-rural composition is that the country is under-urbanized as compared to the developed and even many developing countries. Urban development in China has gradually revealed several structural and functional characteristics that distinguish modern patterns from the urbanization and economic development process in other countries.

This chapter gives a brief demographic description of China's population. Chapter III presents a detailed analysis of population distribution. The study will deal with the population distribution of regions and urban-rural, as well as population movement, after 1949.

END NOTES

- 1, 2. State Statistical Bureau, Statistical Yearbook of China, 1984.
Beijing Chinese Statistics Publishing House, 1984.
3. Guo-xiang Shen, Speech at the United Nations International conference on Population, Mexico City, August, 1984.
- 4, 5, 6. An Ma and Rui-chuan Cha, "Some Analyses of China's Population Conditions," Population Research, No. 3, 1984, pp.24-37.
7. During 1959 to 1961, food shortages occurred due to a series of natural calamities throughout the nation--floods in central and southern China, drought and insect damage in the north.

CHAPTER III

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

The Regional Distribution

China is the most populous country in the world. Its overall population density of 107 persons per square kilometer in 1982 is among the highest in the world; it is much higher than the 12 in the USSR, 14 in Brazil, and 24 in the United States, although it is lower than the 316 in Japan and the 223 in India;¹ it is three times more than the average population density of the whole world. China occupies no more than 7 percent of the total land area of the world, yet has approximately 20 percent of the world's population.

According to the 1982 census, China has a population of 1031.88 million (including the populations of Taiwan and Hong Kong). The distribution of population in the country, however, is most uneven. Although the national density of population is 107 persons per square kilometer, in the 11 coastal municipalities, provinces, and autonomous regions,² the average figure is 320. In some coastal provinces and municipalities in East China, the average population density is extremely high, such as 687 in Tianjing, 486 in Shandong, 1913 in Shanghai and 590 in Jiangsu. By contrast, the vast areas of the 18 provinces and autonomous regions in the interior and

west are thinly populated; the average density is 72 persons per square kilometer. Of these interior provinces and autonomous regions, Tibet, Xinjiang, Qinghai and Inner Mongolia have the lowest density, averaging 8 persons per square kilometer (Table 7). Population density in China has always been higher in the coastal areas and lower in the hinterland. Aside from differences in natural conditions, this distribution reflects the uneven development of the economy in different regions of China. During the last three decades, this situation has been changing. The density of the 11 coastal provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions increased from 194 persons per square kilometer in 1953 to 320 in 1982, an increase of 65 percent. The density of the 18 inland municipalities, provinces and autonomous regions, however, increased from 40 persons per square kilometer in 1953 to 72 in 1982, or an increase of 80.4 percent (Table 8). Population density in the interior increased at a greater rate than in the coastal area.

The main cause of this change is that since 1965, economic development in the interior has been accelerated according to government plan. The construction of heavy industry in the strategic hinterland and the building of inland railroads, together with the relocation of some factories and higher educational institutions to the interior, stimulated migration of many peasants from some of the high-density areas in the coastal regions to the sparsely populated interior areas. At the same time, the natural rate of increase in

TABLE 7
THE POPULATION DENSITY IN CHINA, 1982

REGIONS	AREA (THOUSAND SQUARE KILOMETERS)	TOTAL POPULATION (MILLION)	POPULATION DENSITY
THE COUNTRY'S TOTAL	9600.0	1024.95	107
BEIJING	16.8	9.34	549
TIANJIN	11.3	7.89	687
HEBEI	187.9	54.20	282
SHANXI	156.1	25.72	162
NEI MONGGOL	1088.6	19.55	16
LIAONING	145.8	36.29	245
JILIN	188.0	22.70	120
HEILONGJIANG	473.3	33.06	69
SHANGHAI	6.2	11.94	1913
JIANGSU	102.5	61.35	590
ZHEJIANG	101.8	39.63	382
ANHUI	139.5	50.56	356
HUJIAN	121.7	26.40	213
JIANGXI	166.8	33.84	199
SHANDONG	153.1	75.64	486
HENAN	166.9	75.91	446
HUBEI	187.5	48.35	255

cont.

REGIONS	AREA (THOUSAND SQUARE KILOMETERS)	TOTAL POPULATION (MILLION)	POPULATION DENSITY
<hr/>			
HUNAN	210.2	55.09	257
GUANGDONG	211.8	60.75	280
GUANGXI	230.5	37.33	158
SICHUAN	566.5	100.76	176
GUIZHOU	176.2	29.01	162
YUNNAN	392.2	33.19	83
TIBET	1221.6	1.93	1.6
SHAANXI	205.0	29.31	141
GANSU	455.1	19.88	43
QINGHAI	780.0	3.93	5
NINGXIA	66.1	3.98	59
XINJIANG	1635.0	13.18	8

Source: Huan-yong Hu, Essays on China's Population Distribution,
Shanghai, East China Normal University Press, 1982.

TABLE 8
THE CHANGE IN POPULATION DENSITY IN CHINA, 1953 to 1982

YEAR	COUNTRY	INTERIOR	COASTAL
1953 (persons/km2)	61	40	194
1982 (persons/km2)	107	72	320
1953-1982 (percent)	75.4	80.4	65.0

Source: Calculations based on the Census of 1953 and 1982.

the coastal areas is generally lower than in the hinterland. Most minority nationalities inhabit the interior and they have been experiencing a higher natural increase rate than has the population inhabiting coastal areas.

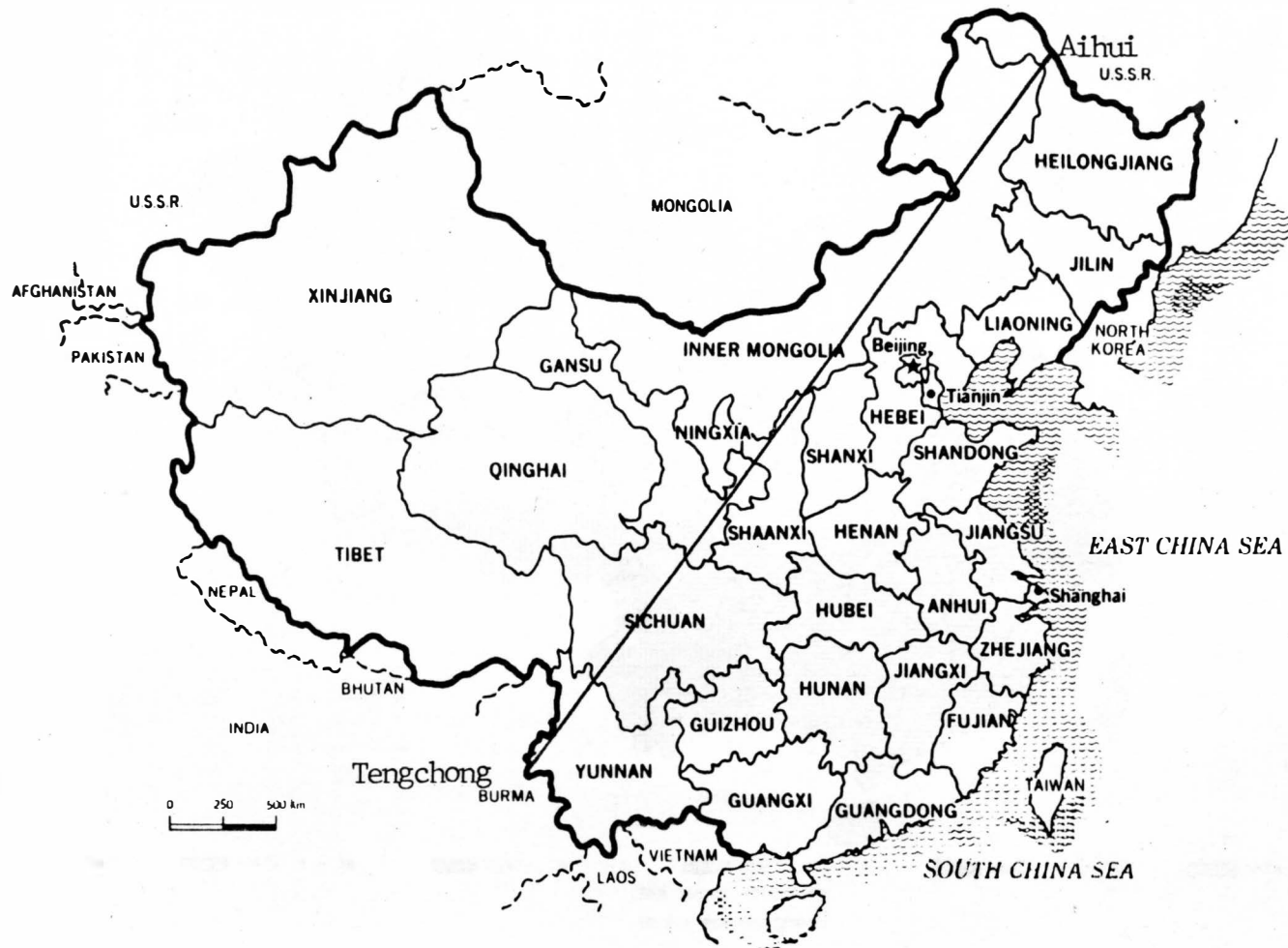
In 1935, Huan-yong Hu, the famous Chinese population geographer, divided whole country into two parts, the northwest half and the southeast half, according to features of the population distribution. The line is drawn starting from Aihui, in Heilongjiang Province, southwestward to Tengchong, in Yunnan Province (see Map 4). The northwest half has 55 percent of the total territory and accounts for only 4 percent of the nation's population, while the southeast has 45 percent of the area and 96 percent of the population.³ In 1982 the southeast accounted for 94 percent and the northwest 6 percent of total population. During the past 50 years, the ratio of population in east and west China has changed little.

China has a vast territory and a large population. Owing to the difference in ecological environment, economic conditions, and diversity in historical development in the different parts of China, the whole country can be divided into four semi-circle population density zones (see Map 5). The zones are as follows:

1. The three municipalities of Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai and the five provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Shandong and Henan are grouped into a zone which makes up 7.3 percent of the total

MAP 4

THE AIHUI - TENGCHONG DIVISION OF CHINA'S TERRITORY



MAP 5
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION DENSITY IN CHINA
1982



DENSITY ZONE 4: 1 - 30 ZONE 3: 31 - 110 ZONE 2: 111 - 300 ZONE 1: OVER 300 DATA ARE OMITTED
PER SQUARE KILOMETER
SOURCE: THE 1982 CENSUS

area of China. Its population totaled 327 million, amounting to 32.2 percent of the country's total. It ranked first in population density (468 persons per square kilometer) among the four zones, being much higher than the country's average population density (107 persons per square kilometer). This zone is endowed with favorable natural conditions. It covers most of the eastern plain with a flat terrain, thick layers of soil, and a plentiful annual rainfall. Most of municipalities and provinces in this area have a long history of both agriculture and industry. The zone also has many medium and large cities, a convenient transportation system, and a higher level of economic development.

2. The second zone includes twelve provinces and one autonomous region (Map 5). There are the provinces of Hebei, Shanxi, Jilin, Liaoning, Fujian, Jiangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, Sichuan, Guizhou and Shannxi, and Guangxi Autonomous Region. The zone has an area of 28.8 percent of the whole country. Its population is 551 million, accounting for 54.3 percent of the national total, making its population density (200 persons per square kilometer) the second highest among the four zones. The average population density of the zone is higher than that of the national average. The major reasons are as follow: Hunan, Hubei, Guangdong, Jiangxi and Fujian are close neighbours and are located in the subtropical zone near the lakes, rivers and seas. They have good natural conditions for agriculture and also are well developed in industry. The other eight provinces and autonomous regions have rich natural and mineral resources.

3. The third zone is located in the interior of China. The three provinces of Heilongjiang, Yunnan, and Gansu, and the Ningxia Autonomous Region are incorporated into the lower population density zone. This zone makes up 14.5 percent of the country's total territory and 8.7 percent of total population. The population density in these four provinces and autonomous regions is 64 persons per square kilometer, considerably lower than the country's average. A hinterland location, poor natural conditions for agriculture (some areas with poor climate, soil, or landform conditions), later discovery, and inconvenient transportation contribute to this zone lower population density.

4. The lowest population density region comprises the three autonomous regions of Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet, and Qinghai province. Combined, they have about 49.4 percent of the total territory and only 3.8 percent of the total population. The population density (8 persons per square kilometer) is much lower than the country's average. This zone has the poorest natural conditions with high mountains, plateaus and deserts. It also was discovered later and is a backward region in terms of economic development.

Uneven distribution is a main characteristic of China's population. It has changed little over time. The migration of people is one of the ways to redistribute population. Population movement is discussed in the following section.

Population Movement

The movement of people from place to place, or migration, plays an important role in the distribution of people. Since 1949, migration has occurred on a large scale within the country. According to government estimates, the net movement of population is about 25 to 30 million since 1949. The main features of this migration can be summarized as follow:

First, the western and northeastern part of the country is rich in natural resources. The land areas, pastures, water and irrigation resources, and some kinds of minerals represent the greater part of the national total. However, this region lacks an educated and skilled labor force. During the early-1950s, many skilled workers, technicians and educated young people migrated from the coastal area to western and northeastern China to seek employment. From 1964 to 1975, millions of urban-born young adults were sent to rural and border areas to develop these backward areas. But after 1975, many of these young people returned to the cities from which they had come. The direction of these population movements was planned by the Chinese government. The movement of several million people into the interior in connection with industrial and agricultural developments has made significant changes in the economy of the provinces affected by in-migration. However, the out-migration of these millions has not made a notable dent in the economy of the provinces which they left.

There are certain natural restrictions and barriers to a large population movement. Were it not for the lack of rainfall, rugged topography, soils, isolation and other factors, these lands would have been much more densely settled long before now. After all, many educated people moved to the backward areas with their lack of labor force. The population density of Heilongjiang Province was 15 persons per square kilometer in 1951. It increased to 69 by 1982, with about one-third of the total population in the province having in-migrated. Such migration has made a significant change in the economy of western and northeastern China.

Second, peasants from some of the natural disaster⁴ areas, such as Sichuan and Hunan provinces, migrated spontaneously to the surrounding areas. This kind of population movement only happened from 1959 to 1961.

Third, the flow of rural to urban migration has existed for about 30 years and was especially strong during the early-1950s, when the rural-to-urban movement was fairly free. However, this unplanned movement of people has been controlled by the national policy since 1960. So the rural to urban population movement is now relatively slight.

In short, whether people migrated by government plan or spontaneously, internal population movement has greatly influenced the distribution of population and economic development.

Out-migration has reduced population pressure in some areas while, on the other hand, the areas of in-migration have experienced significant changes in economic development. Uneven distribution of population has existed for hundreds of years, however, and it is not easy to change settlement patterns during the short period.

The Urban-rural Population Distribution

One important aspect of China's urban population must be noted. There is a great deal of confusion in the definition and demarcation of urban places, and in the meaning of the term "urban population."

In China, a settlement of more than 2,000 people generally is considered to be a town. In 1955, after the publication of the 1953 census, the Chinese State Council issued a set of "Criteria for the demarcation between Urban and Rural Areas," which defines urban places to be: (1) administrative centers at the xian (county) and higher levels; (2) places with 2,000 or more people, at least half of whom are engaged in nonagricultural activities; and (3) places with 1,000 to 2,000 people, at least 75 percent of whom are nonagricultural.⁵ The 1982 census reported 2,664 towns in China, as compared to 5,404 towns in 1953 (see Table 9).

At the time of the 1953 census China had 164 cities or major urban centers. The number rose to 235 cities in the 1982 census.

TABLE 9
URBAN PLACES IN CHINA, 1953 TO 1982

Year	Number of Cities	Number of Towns	Total
1953	164	5,404	5,568
1978	189	3,261	3,450
1980	216	3,200	3,416
1982	236	2,664	2,900

Source: Mei-ling Hsu, "Growth and Control of Population in China: the Urban-Rural Contrast," Annals of AAG, Vol. 75, No. 2, June 1985, p. 243.

China , unlike many other developing countries, did not encounter an explosive expansion of large cities. Nevertheless, during three decades many cities grew and moved from a smaller city-size group to a larger one, as is reflected in Table 10. Thus the number of large cities increased substantially at the expense of smaller ones.

Small sized cities decreased in number from 113 in 1953 to 65 in 1982, or a 42.5 percent decline. That is because many small sized cities grew up and became medium or large cities. Baotou, "a steel city," for example, had about 150,000 people in 1953 and increased to one million in 1982.

In China, there are two ways of calculating urban population. The "total population of the municipalities and towns" (Shizhen Zongrenkou) refers to the entire population residing in the administrative area of the municipalities and towns, including the population devoted to agriculture and not dependent on commercial food grain, but excluding the population in the counties under municipal jurisdiction. The "city and town population" (Chengzhen renkou) refers to the total population of the municipalities and towns excluding those who are not supplied with commercial food grain. The third population census of China (1982) adopted the first definition.⁶

In order to compare the urban population of the 1953, 1964 and 1982 censuses, the State Statistical Bureau adjusted the

TABLE 10
CITIES BY SIZE, 1953 AND 1982

City size (person)	Number of cities	Number of cities
	----- 1953	----- 1982
More than 1,000,000	9	38
500,000-1,000,000	16	47
200,000-500,000	28	86
Less than 200,000	113	65
Total	166	236

Source: Yisheng Ding, "The Urban and Rural Distribution of China's Population," Population Research, No. 4, p. 15.

collected data to derive an urban total roughly comparable to the 1982 census definition (Table 11). These figures show that China's population remains largely rural (Figure 4), a factor closely related to the country's low economic level. At the same time, it is explained by the fact that the Chinese government maintains strict control over the growth of the urban population and has adopted measures to restrict the flow of rural population into cities. This unplanned rural to urban move has been strictly controlled by the registration system. In order to move from a rural to an urban location, a person must first obtain a certificate of employment from an urban labor agency, a certificate of acceptance from a school, or a certificate of approval for movement from an urban agency for the administration of population registers. Persons who move to an urban area without government approval may be refused permanent registration in the city, but may stay there for years as temporary residents with their location of permanent registration still in the countryside.

China is under-urbanized when compared to the developed and even many developing countries (Table 12). The 1982 census reported the urban population to be 206.6 million, or 20.6 percent of the total population. For most provinces, however, the degree of urbanization was below the national average (Map 3 and Table 13). If we divided the country to two parts (see Map 6), the southeast part represents 93 percent of the total urban population, and the

TABLE 11
URBAN POPULATION IN CHINA, IN 1953, 1964 AND 1982

Year	Urban (city and town) population (1,000)	Percent of total Population
1953	77,257	13.2
1964	127,103	18.4
1982	206,589	20.6

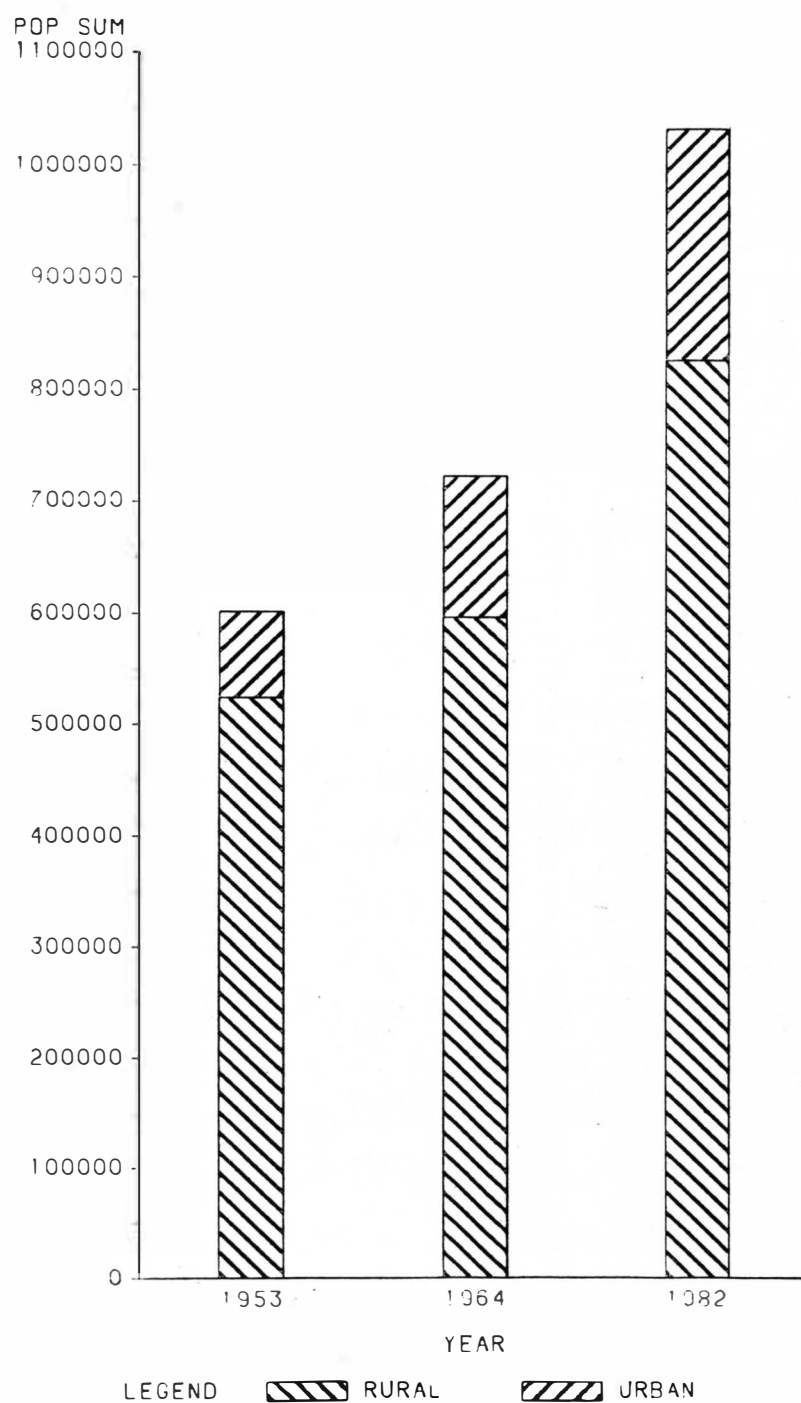
Source: Mei-ling Hsu, "Growth and Control of Population in China: the Urban-Rural Contrast," Annals of AAG, Vol. 75, No. 2, June 1985, p. 243.

TABLE 12
THE DEGREE OF URBANIZATION IN THE 1980S

Percent of Urban Population	
<hr/>	
The whole world	40
Developed countries	71
Developing countries	36
China	21

Source: 1984 Population Reference Bureau Data Sheet.

Note: Estimates refer to some point in the late 1970s or early 1980s.



SOURCE: BASED ON THE CENSUSES OF 1953, 1964 AND 1982

FIGURE 4. THE GROWTH OF URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION IN CHINA

TABLE 13
PROVINCIAL DISTRIBUTION OF URBAN POPULATION IN 1982

REGIONS	TOTAL POPULATION (MILLION)	URBAN POPULATION	URBAN (%)
THE COUNTRY'S TOTAL	1003.94	206.588	20.6
BEIJING	9.23	5.97	64.7
TIANJIN	7.76	5.33	68.7
HEBEI	53.01	7.21	13.7
SHANXI	25.29	5.31	21.0
NEI MONGGOL	19.27	5.56	28.9
LIAONING	35.72	15.13	42.4
JILIN	22.56	8.94	39.6
HEILONGJIANG	32.67	13.24	40.5
SHANGHAI	11.86	6.98	58.8
JIANGSU	60.52	9.57	15.8
ZHEJIANG	38.88	10.00	25.7
ANHUI	49.67	7.08	14.3
FUJIAN	25.87	5.48	21.2
JIANGXI	33.18	6.45	19.4
SHANDONG	74.42	14.19	19.1

Cont.

REGIONS	TOTAL	URBAN	
	POPULATION (MILLION)	POPULATION	URBAN (%)
HENAN	74.42	10.51	14.1
HUBEI	47.80	8.28	17.3
HUNAN	54.01	7.77	14.4
GUANGDONG	59.30	11.08	18.7
GUANGXI	36.42	4.31	11.8
SICHUAN	99.71	14.25	14.3
GUIZHOU	28.55	5.63	19.7
YUNNAN	32.55	4.19	12.9
TIBET	1.89	0.18	9.5
SHAANXI	28.90	5.49	19.0
GANSU	19.57	3.00	15.3
QINGHAI	3.90	0.80	20.5
NINGXIA	3.90	0.88	22.5
XINJIANG	13.08	3.72	28.4

Source: The 1982 census.

MAP 6
DIVISIONS OF SOUTHEAST AND NORTHWEST COUNTRY



northwest accounts for 7 percent of the total urban population. However, the degree of urbanization in the southeast is 20.4 percent, and in the northwest part is 22.9 percent which is higher than the national average.

Despite this low level of urbanization, the total number of inhabitants in urban places is enormous. After all, only three other countries -- India, the Soviet Union , and the United States -- even have national populations greater than 200 million!

END NOTES

1. All foreign data are for 1980.
2. Including Liaoning, Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi Province, and Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai.
3. Huan-yong Hu Essays on China's Population Distribution, Shanghai, East China Normal University Press, 1982.(in Chinese)
4. During 1959 to 1961, food shortages occurred, due to a series of natural calamities throughout the nation-- floods in central and southern China, drought and insect damage in the north.
5. Yuan H. Tien, China's Population Struggle: Demographic Decisions of the People's Republic, 1949-1969, Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1973.
6. Cheng-rui Li, "On the Results of the Chinese Census," Population and Development Review, Vol. 9, No. 2, June 1983, pp. 326-345.

CHAPTER IV

POPULATION GROWTH

The focus of this chapter is to describe and document the rapid growth in population which China has experienced since 1949, and show what the government has tried to do in order to slow the rate of population growth.

Introduction

China's territory is the third largest in the world, being slightly large than the United States; however, only about a third is truly habitable, the rest being mountains or deserts. Thus, whatever China's future population size is to be, it must be accommodated and fed in the habitable area.

At present, population in the country is over one billion people -- approximately 20 percent of humanity. The control of population growth has become an important task facing the Chinese people. China's government has been very diligent in its effort to limit total population to 1.2 billion by the end of the century.

In the 35 years from 1949 to 1984, China's population had risen by 91.0 percent, a net increase of 493 million people and an average annual increase of 14 million people (see Table 14 and Figure 5). During this 35 year period, its natural population growth has experienced four peaks (Figure 6). In 1963, the peak birth rate reached 43.4 per thousand, the peak natural growth rate reached 33.4 per thousand, and the largest annual increase of population was as 23 million. However, as the government's leadership in the work of family planning has been strengthened since 1973, the birth rate fell to 17.5 per thousand and the natural growth rate to 10.8 per thousand by 1984. At present, China is striving to keep the total population limited to 1.2 billion by the year 2,000.

Pattern of Population Growth

A closer examination of annual growth rate reveals a great difference between the numerical increase between the first census of 1953 and the third census of 1982. According to past censuses (Table 15), the increase between 1953 and 1964 was 121.14 million persons, an increase rate of 20 percent, and an average annual increase of 11 million persons.

The third census on 1 July 1982 showed a population of 1031.88 million in the country. Compared with the 723.07 million persons enumerated in the second census on 1 July 1964, the

TABLE 14
THE DEMOGRAPHIC EVOLUTION SINCE 1949

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION (million)	BIRTH RATE	DEATH RATE (per thousand)	NATURAL RATE
1949	541.67	36.0	20.0	16.0
1950	551.96	37.0	18.0	19.0
1951	563.00	37.8	17.8	20.0
1952	574.82	37.0	17.0	20.0
1953	587.96	37.0	14.0	23.0
1954	602.66	38.0	13.2	24.8
1955	614.65	32.6	12.3	20.3
1956	628.28	31.9	11.4	20.5
1957	646.53	34.0	10.8	23.2
1958	659.94	29.2	12.0	17.2
1959	672.07	24.8	14.7	10.2
1960	662.07	20.9	25.4	-4.5
1961	658.59	18.0	14.2	3.8
1962	672.95	37.0	10.0	27.0
1963	691.72	43.4	10.0	33.4
1964	704.99	39.1	11.5	27.6
1965	725.38	37.9	9.5	28.4
1966	745.42	35.1	8.8	26.3
1967	763.68	34.0	8.4	25.6

cont.

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION (million)	BIRTH RATE	DEATH RATE	NATURAL RATE
		(per thousand)		
1968	785.34	35.6	8.2	27.4
1969	806.71	34.1	8.0	26.1
1970	829.92	33.4	7.6	25.8
1971	852.29	30.7	7.3	23.4
1972	871.77	29.8	7.6	22.2
1973	892.11	27.9	7.0	20.9
1974	908.59	24.8	7.3	17.5
1975	924.20	23.0	7.3	15.7
1976	937.17	19.9	7.3	12.6
1977	949.74	18.9	6.9	12.0
1978	962.59	18.3	6.3	12.0
1979	975.42	17.8	6.2	11.6
1980	987.05	18.2	6.3	11.9
1981	1,000.72	20.9	6.4	14.5
1982	1,015.41	21.1	6.6	14.5
1983	1,024.95	18.6	7.1	11.5
1984	1,034.75	17.5	6.7	10.8

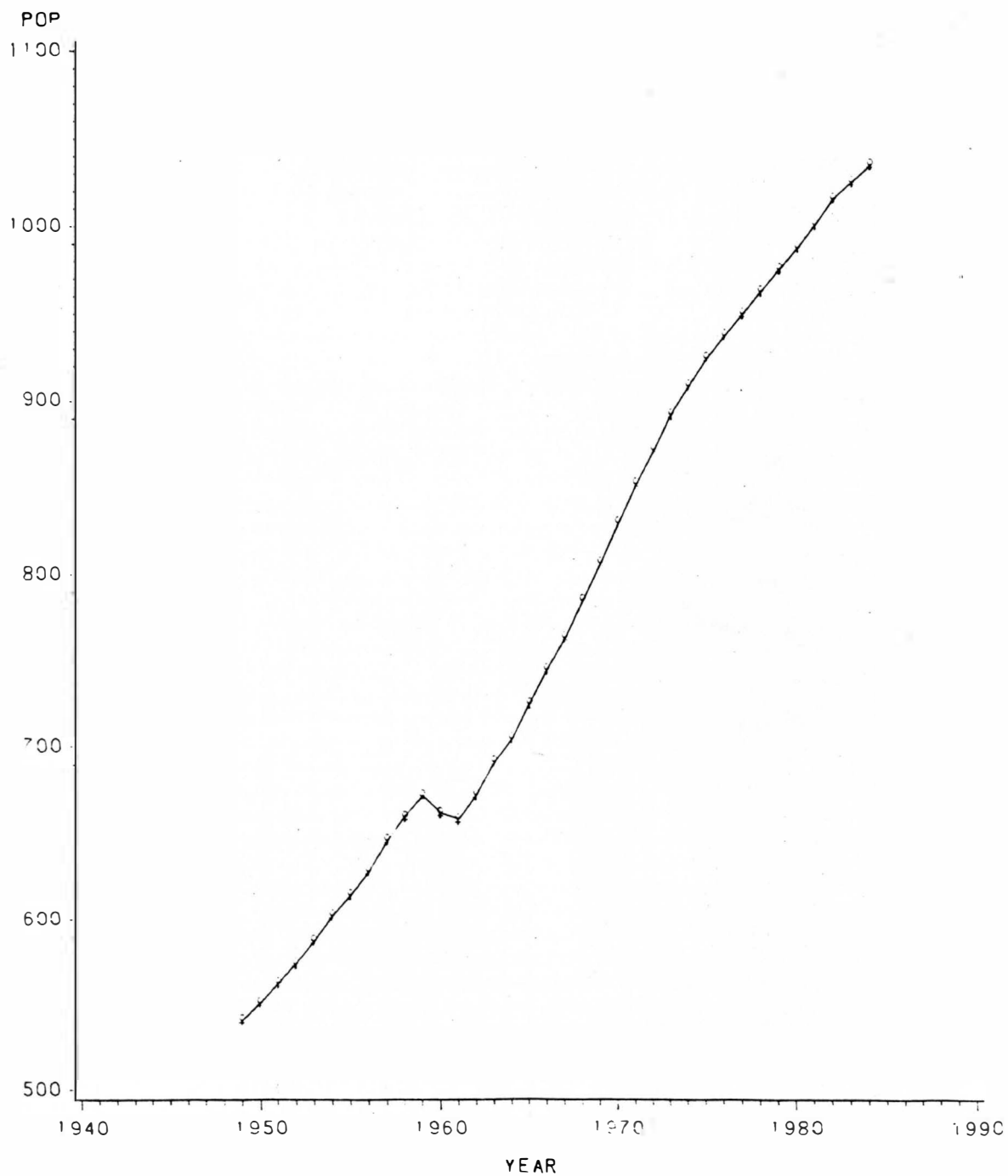
Source: Statistical Yearbook of China, 1985

TABLE 15
POPULATION GROWTH IN CHINA, 1953 TO 1982

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION* (million)	AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATES (per hundred)
1953	601.93	
1964	723.07	1.83
1982	1031.88	2.37

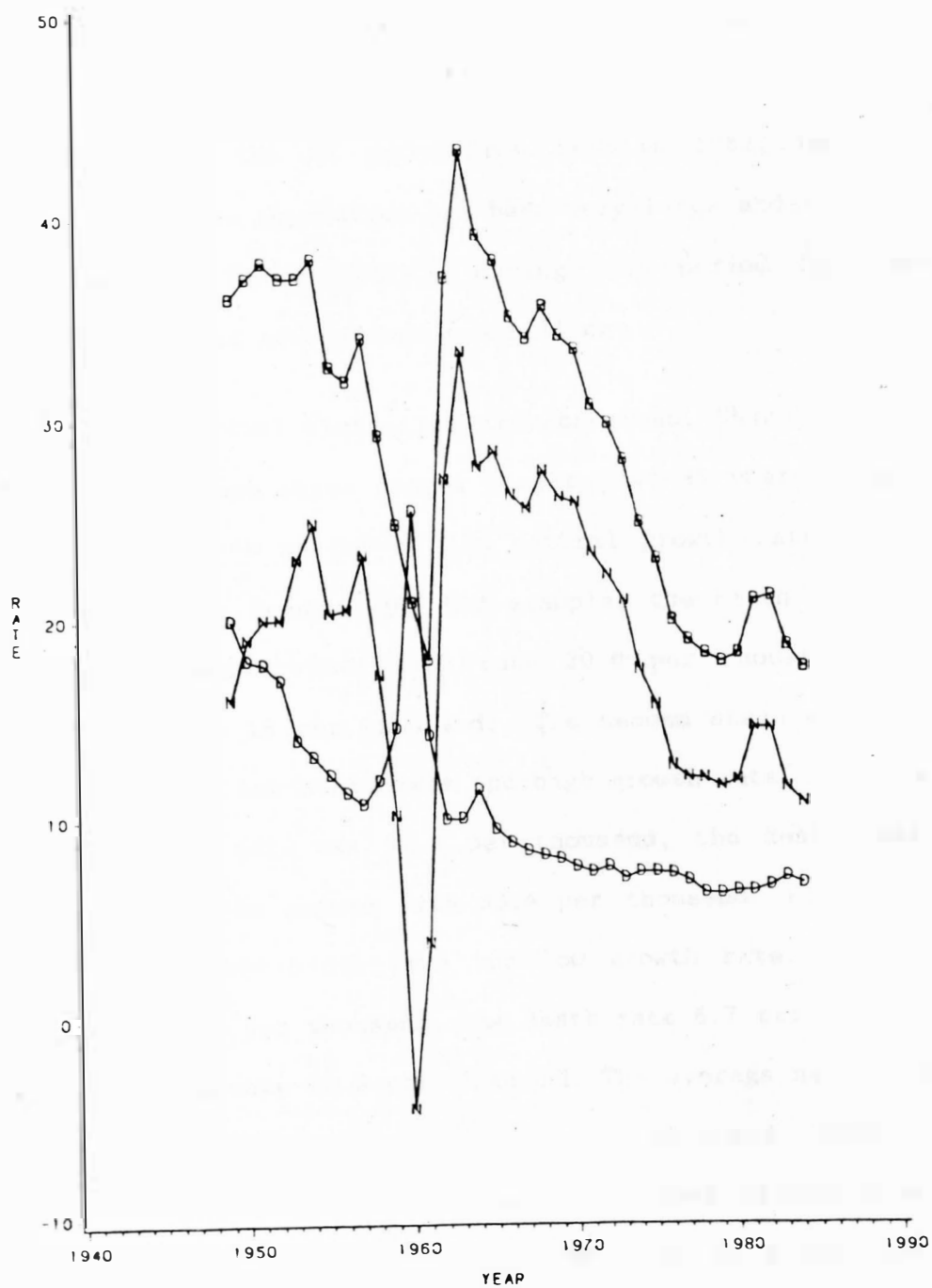
Source: The Censuses of 1953, 1964 and 1982.

Note: * Including the populations of Taiwan and Hong Kong.



IN MILLION

FIGURE 5 POPULATION GROWTH IN CHINA



RATE PER THOUSAND

B = Birth Rate D = Death Rate N = Natural Increase Rate

FIGURE 6 VITAL STATISTICS IN CHINA

population has increased by 308.81 million persons, an increase of 43 percent, with an average annual increase of 17.16 million persons. This shows that in the 18 years from 1964 to 1982, the absolute growth of the Chinese population has been very large and the increase rate quite high. The population during this period increased by nearly 50 percent and now exceeds one billion.

As far as vital statistics are concerned, China's population has likewise undergone three stages in the past 35 years (Figure 6). The first stage was a period of low natural growth rate with birth and death rates both being high. For example, the birth rate in 1949 was 36.0 per thousand, the death rate 20.0 per thousand, and the natural growth rate 16 per thousand. The second stage was a period of high birth rate, low death rate and high growth rate. In 1963, for example, the birth rate was 43.4 per thousand, the death rate 10.0 per thousand, and the growth rate 33.4 per thousand. Finally, there came a period of low birth rate and low growth rate. In 1984 the birth rate was 17.5 per thousand, the death rate 6.7 per thousand and the natural growth rate 10.8 per thousand. The average natural growth rate of the world's population is 17 per thousand, that of the developed countries is 6 per thousand, while that of the developing countries is 21 per thousand.¹ Although China is a developing country, its population registers a natural growth rate lower than the world average.

In the 35 years from 1949 to 1984, there were four growth peaks (Figure 6). During the 1950s, population rose rapidly. Because of improvements in the people's standard of living and health conditions. Without proper control of the population growth due to the traditional ideas of childbearing, the death rates declined greatly while the birth rates increased. The population size was growing at a natural increase rate of about 2 percent a year. This marked the first peak period, in 1954, during which births numbered over 20 million.

The early-1960s marked a period of lower natural growth because of natural calamities.² In 1963, the population again grew rapidly, a condition which led to the second peak with births numbering over 30 million during the year.

During the "Cultural Revolution" from 1966 to 1972, the population grew unchecked, leading to the third peak. Since 1973, as a result of the government's strenuous efforts to enforce family planning, there has been a steady decline both in the birth rate and in the natural population growth rate year after year.

The fourth peak appeared in 1981 and 1982. The death rate changed only slightly, but the birth rate increased. The following reasons can be suggested in explanation of the fourth peak. First, the reproductive age of women has been lower in rural areas due to the new marital law that became effective in 1981. Second, two

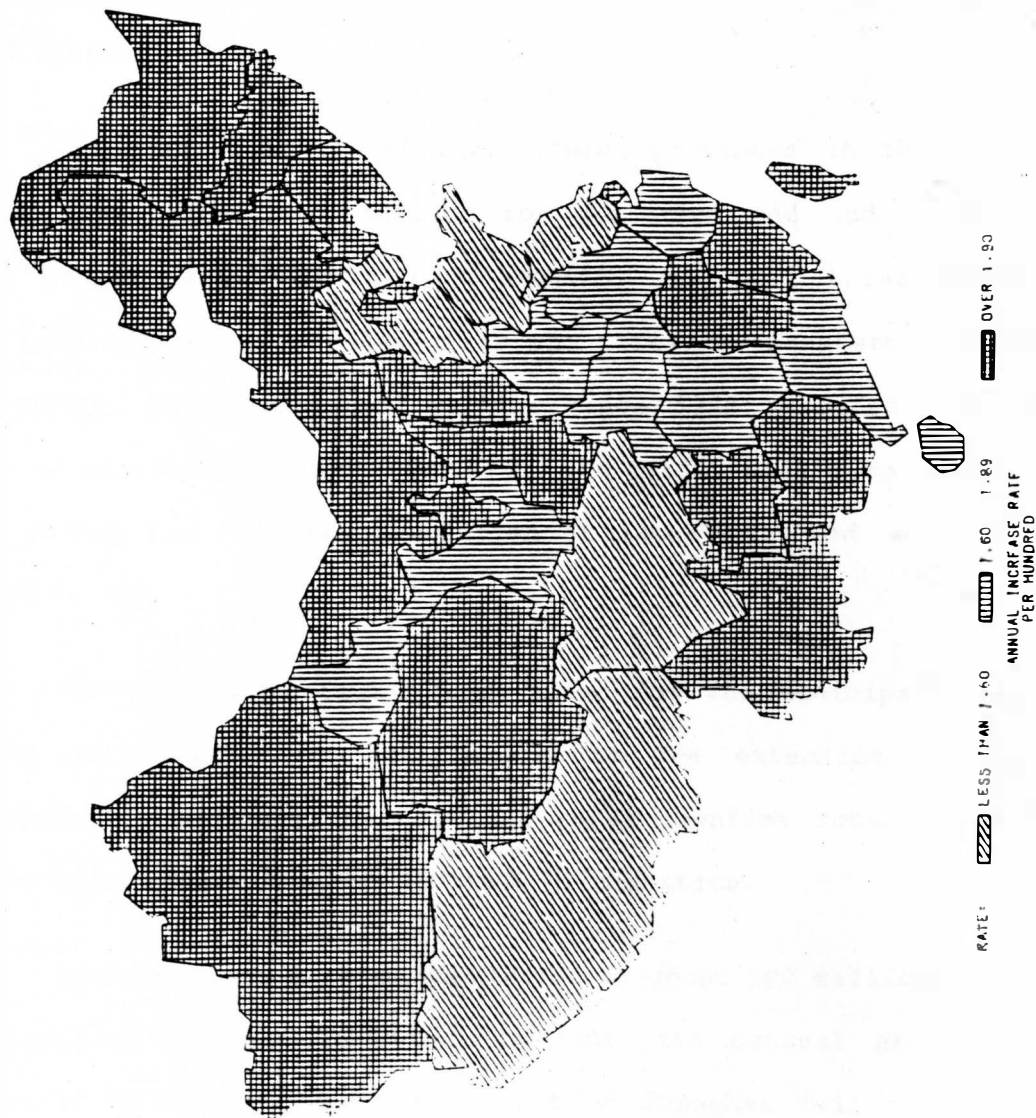
periods of rapid growth occurred, one in the 1950s and another in the 1960s, which have resulted in a surge of females of reproductive age in the 1980s and beyond. This means that about 13 million young females will reach marrying age. This fact, at least in part, explains the unwelcome jump in the growth rate in 1981 and 1982.

It should be realized that in China, due to the large population base, a one percent increase means an increase of 10 million persons. The 1983 natural increase rate was 1.15 percent. If the population continued to grow at that rate, China would have 1.255 billion persons by the end of this century. Therefore, doing well in family planning and further reducing the birth rate is a very important task facing the nation.

Regional Population Growth

Population growth by provinces is extremely varied (Map 7). As Table 16 indicates, the provinces around China's border, such as Heilongjiang, Jilin, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Qinghai and Xinjiang, have been characterized by high population growth rates since 1953. Indeed the total population of the interior provinces has witnessed a growth of 2.8 percent per year since 1953, while in the coastal areas the growth has averaged a 2.2 percent per year. The most rapidly growing provincial populations of Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang have expanded by nearly 5.0 percent per year. There are two

MAP 7
POPULATION GROWTH BY PROVINCES IN CHINA
 1951-1962



SOURCE: THE CENSUSES OF 1953 AND 1962

main reasons for the rapidly increasing population of inland areas. The first is immigration from areas of high population density in eastern China to the northwest and northeast of China. Secondly, higher rates of natural increase account for the faster growth in the inland areas.

The densely populated agricultural provinces in the eastern part of China have been settled for centuries and had relatively slower growth rates than western areas in the past three decades. The slight decline of population in the three northeastern provinces of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang since 1978 resulted from the return of millions of former youths to the cities they were forced to leave during the Cultural Revolution of late-1960s and early-1970s (see Table 16).

The high percentage growth rates for the municipalities of Beijing and Tianjin are due largely to the extension of their administrative boundaries to include rural counties rather than to high rates of either natural increase or migration.

Sichuan, with a total population of about 100 million, is the most populous province in China. In 1981, its natural growth rate fell to 10.94 per thousand, while that of Shanghai fell to 9.7 per thousand. They are the most advanced in family planning.³

The Population Growth Of Urban And Rural Areas

TABLE 16

GROWTH OF CHINA'S PROVINCIAL POPULATIONS, 1953 TO 1982

REGION	TOTAL POPULATION			GROWTH OF POPULATION**	
	1953**	1978*	1982**	1953 - 1982 Millions	%
	(millions)				
THE COUNTRY'S TOTAL	583.16	958.09	1,013.61	430.45	74
BEIJING	2.77	8.50	9.23	6.46	233
TIANJIN	2.69	7.21	7.76	5.07	188
HEBEI	37.88	50.57	53.00	15.12	40
SHANXI	14.31	24.24	25.29	10.98	77
NEI MONGGOL	7.33	8.90	19.27	11.94	163
LIAONING	20.56	37.43	35.72	15.16	74
JILIN	11.29	24.74	22.56	11.27	100
HEILONGJIANG	11.90	33.76	32.66	20.76	174
SHANGHAI	6.20	10.98	11.86	5.66	91
JIANGSU	40.93	58.34	60.50	19.57	48
ZHEJIANG	22.87	37.51	38.89	16.02	70
ANHUI	30.66	47.13	49.67	19.01	62
FUJIAN	13.14	24.50	25.93	12.79	97
JIANGXI	16.77	31.83	33.19	16.42	98
SHANDONG	48.88	71.60	74.41	25.53	52
HENAN	44.21	70.99	74.42	30.21	68

cont.

REGIONS	TOTAL POPULATION			GROWTH OF POPULATION**	
				1953 - 1982	
	1953**	1978*	1982**	Millions	%
	(millions)				
HUBEI	27.79	45.75	47.80	20.01	72
HUNAN	33.23	51.66	54.01	20.78	63
GUANGDONG	36.74	55.93	59.30	22.56	61
GUANGXI	17.59	34.02	36.42	18.83	107
SICHUAN	65.68	97.07	99.71	34.03	52
GUIZHOU	15.04	26.86	28.55	13.51	90
YUNNAN	17.47	30.92	32.35	14.88	85
TIBET	1.27	1.79	1.89	0.62	49
SHAANXI	15.88	27.79	28.90	13.02	82
GANSU	11.59	18.73	19.57	7.98	69
QINGHAI	1.68	3.65	3.90	2.22	132
NINGXIA	1.94	3.66	3.90	1.96	101
XINJIANG	4.87	12.33	13.08	8.21	169

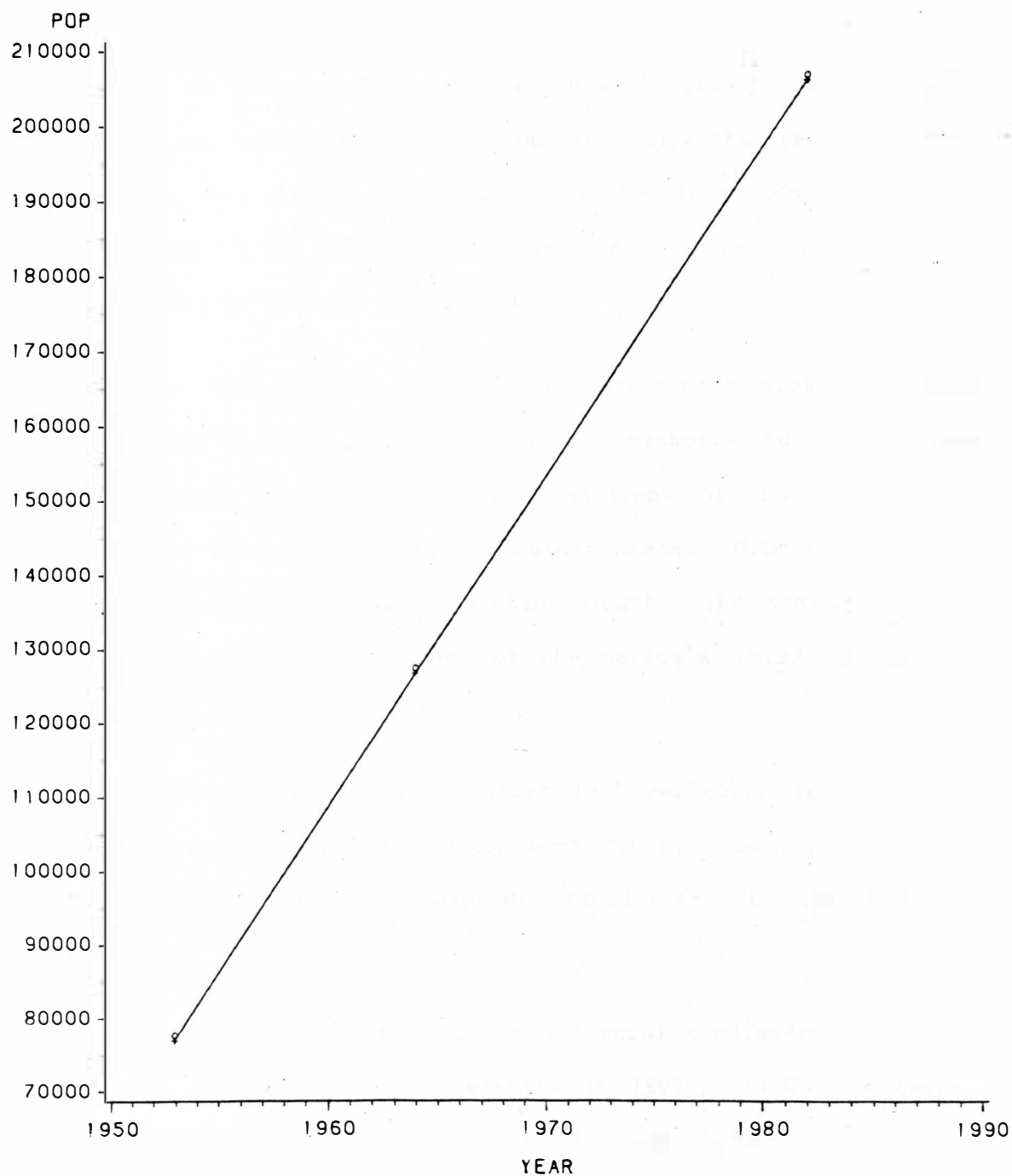
Source: *Laurence J. C. Ma, "Preliminary Results of the 1982 Census in China," Geographical Review, Vol. 73, No. 2.

**Huan-yong Hu, Essays on China's Population Distribution,

China's urban population figures always have been in some confusion. The statistical problems have been complicated by the changes in municipal boundaries since the late 1950s, which allowed many municipalities to engulf whole counties, including substantial rural populations and quite a number of discrete county-level cities and towns. But the most basic problems arise from changes in the definition of an urban area and the uncertainty of its application. In the present population report forms, the methods for computing certain items, such as the method of distinguishing agricultural from nonagricultural population, are not quite rational.

The figures used in this study have been adjusted based on the 1982 census definition of urban population. That is, the urban population refers to the entire population residing in the administrative area of the municipalities and towns, including the population devoted to agriculture and not dependent on commercial food grain, but excluding the population residing in counties under municipal jurisdiction.

At the time of the 1953 census, China had about 77.3 million or a 13.2 percent urban population. The 1982 census reported the urban population to be 206.6 million, or 20.6 percent of the total. The urban population increased 167 percent between 1953 and 1982 (Figure 7), a relatively slow gain. The percentage of urban population increased only 7.4 percent from 1953 to 1982. By comparison, Brazil's urban population accounted for 61.3 percent of



IN 1,000

FIGURE 7. GROWTH OF URBAN POPULATION IN CHINA

country's total population in 1975, and 69.2 percent in 1983, an increase of 7.9 percentage points during 8 years.⁴

In the 1950s, because the natural growth of the urban population had been moving at a high rate and the rural to urban movement was fairly free, the urban population increased rapidly (see Table 17 and Table 18); it increased from 10.6 percent of the nation's total in 1949 to 15.4 in 1957.

From 1960 to 1975, the natural increase of urban population slowed as the Chinese government adopted measures to prevent most rural to urban migration. In fact, millions of urban-born young adults were relocated in rural and border areas. This resulted in a decline in the rate of urban population growth. The urban population stabilized at around 17 percent of the nation's total during this period.

Increasing urbanization after 1975 reflected the return to cities of many persons previously sent to the countryside. As a result, the urban population expanded rapidly in 1983 and 1984 (see Table 18).

The natural growth of urban and rural populations was quite high before 1965. But the differences in living conditions between rural and urban areas has led to varying rates of natural population growth. In 1957 and 1962 the natural growth rate in the urban areas was higher than that in the countryside, but the year 1965 saw a

TABLE 17
VITAL STATISTICAL OF URBAN AND RURAL, 1957 TO 1984

YEAR	BIRTH	URBAN			BIRTH	RURAL		
		DEATH	NATURAL	INCREASE		DEATH	NATURAL	INCREASE
		RATES	RATES			RATES	RATES	
1957	44.48	8.47	36.01		32.81	11.07	21.74	
1962	35.46	8.28	27.18		37.27	10.32	26.95	
1965	26.59	5.69	20.90		39.53	10.06	29.47	
1975	14.71	5.39	9.32		24.17	7.59	16.58	
1976	13.12	6.60	6.52		20.85	7.35	13.50	
1977	13.38	5.51	7.87		19.70	7.06	12.64	
1978	13.56	5.12	8.44		18.91	6.42	12.49	
1979	13.67	5.07	8.60		18.43	6.39	12.04	
1980	14.17	5.48	8.69		18.82	6.47	12.35	
1981	16.45	5.14	11.31		21.55	6.53	15.02	
1982	18.24	5.28	12.96		21.97	7.00	14.97	
1983	15.99	5.92	10.07		19.89	7.69	12.20	
1984	15.00	5.86	9.14		17.90	6.73	11.17	

Source: Statistical Yearbook of China, 1985.

TABLE 18
GROWTH OF URBAN POPULATIONS, 1949 TO 1984

YEAR	URBAN POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN POPULATION
1949	57.65	10.6
1952	71.63	12.5
1957	99.49	15.4
1962	*	17.3
1965	130.45	18.0
1970	*	17.4
1975	*	17.3
1976	*	17.4
1977	*	17.6
1978	172.45	17.9
1979	184.95	19.0
1980	191.40	19.4
1981	201.71	20.2
1982	211.54	20.8
1983	241.26	23.5
1984	330.66	31.9

Source: Statistical Yearbook of China, 1985.

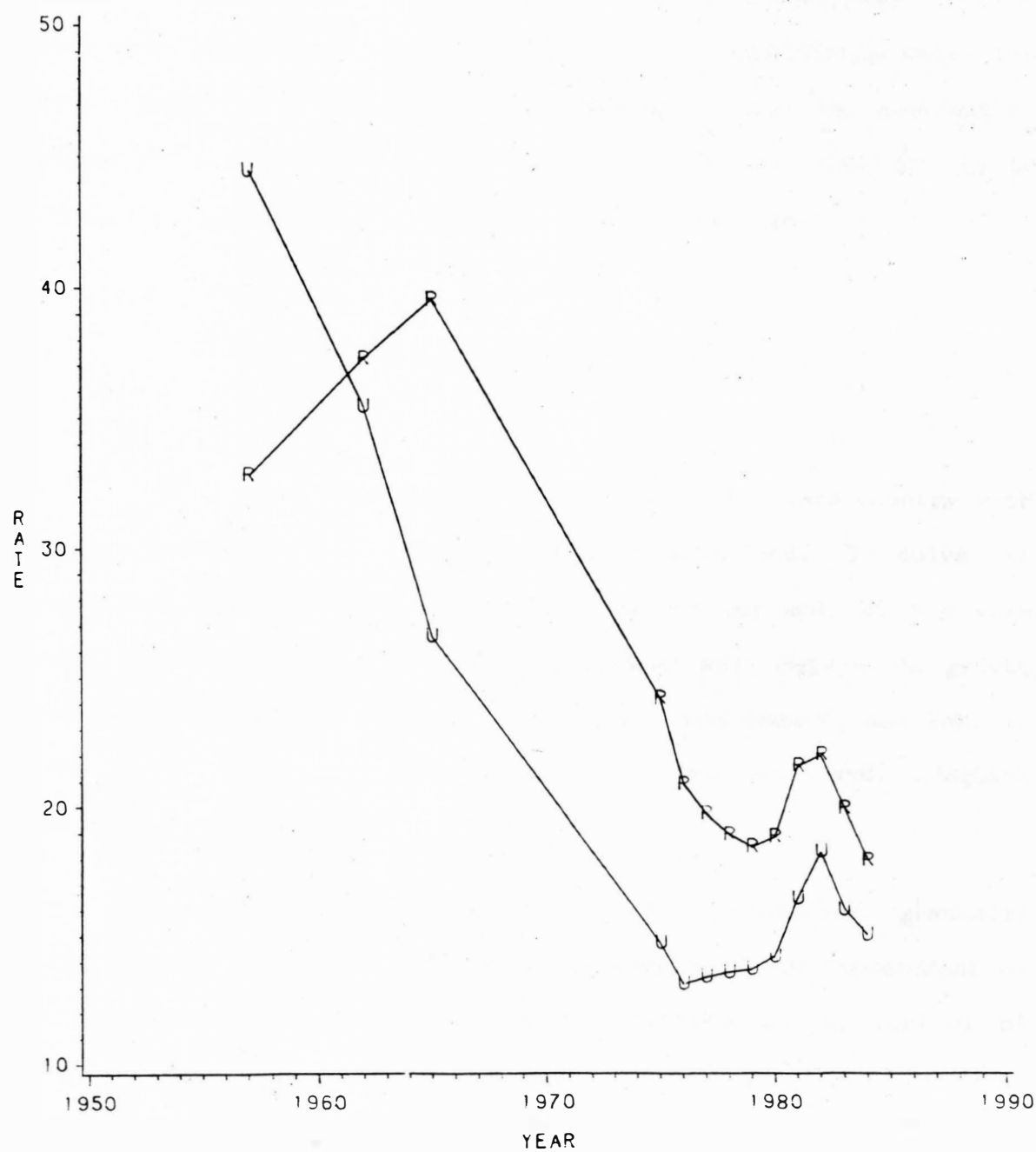
Note: *Data are not available.

change -- the former becoming lower than the latter (Table 17). Since 1965, the natural growth rate in urban centers has been lower than that in rural areas.

As is shown on Table 17, death rates remained higher in rural than in urban areas, because access to medical care was still infrequent in the rural areas. Urban birth rates also remain much lower than in rural areas (Figure 8), because urbanites have been more responsive to the government's calls to marry late and to have one child per family. On the whole, the first marriage of city women takes place two to three years later in life than does that of rural women. Similarly, the ages at which women have their first and subsequent births are two to three years older for urbanites.⁵

Urban places in China are successfully controlling their natural growth because they have many advantages over rural areas in education, occupational structure, health care, welfare for the elderly, communication networks, and so on.

China's major population problems are in rural areas. The roots of today's demographic behavior among the rural people are complex; being both cultural and historical in origin. On the one hand, rural residents, being less educated and mostly farmers, are bound to traditional views and needs and are more resistant to population planning. On the other hand, these people proved to be quick in response to certain policies such as the responsibility



RATE: PER THOUSAND
U = URBAN R = RURAL
FIGURE 8. BIRTH RATES OF URBAN AND RURAL

system and the new marital law that took effect in 1981. The latter lowered the minimum age allowed for the first marriage; many citizens took this law to be a sign of leniency, and consequently there has been a surge in the number of early marriages. This has resulted in higher rural birth rates in 1981 and 1982 (Table 17). The details of population problems are discussed in the next section.

The Control of Population Growth

China is an economically and culturally backward country with a big population base but a shortage of arable land. To solve its population problem, China must develop its economy and, at the same time, control population growth in a planned way. Population growth must be harmonized with economic and social development, and kept in line with the wise utilization of resources and adequate environmental protection.

From 1949 to the early-1970s, living conditions gradually improved with rapid socioeconomic development and the improvement of medical and health services. Meanwhile, without proper control of the population growth and due to traditional ideas of childbearing, the pattern of population growth remained for a long time, a high birth rate, low death rate and high natural growth rate. With but few exceptions, the average annual rate of natural increase before 1973

was over 2 percent (see Table 14). The total population went from 542 million in 1949 to 892 million in 1973, an increase of 64.6 percent, i.e. a net increase of 350 million in 24 years with an average annual growth rate 2.7 percent. The sharp population increase has brought about a large population base with a young age structure and rapid growth. According to the 1982 census, people at or under the age of thirty account for 63 percent of the total population, with a median age of 22.9 years. About 11 million young couples will reach the age of marriage and childbearing annually in each of the remaining years of the century. China's comparatively backward economy and traditional culture, with the foregoing demographic features, show the necessity and urgency for the country to control its population growth.

To promote family planning is a basic national policy of China. It requires late marriage and fewer, but healthier, children with the aim of controlling population quantity and improving its quality (in terms of health and education).

Considering the dire demographic situation (a large population base with a young age composition), since 1979 the Chinese government has advocated the practice of "one couple, one child." However, this is only a temporary policy of a specific period and does not mean "one child only" in every case. In carrying out the family planning program, the government set different requirements and offered specific guidance to the people of various localities

with different economic, cultural, and demographic conditions. The requirements are more flexible in rural areas than in urban areas, for example, and among the people of national minorities than they are among the people of the Han nationality. The couples who are single children themselves may have two children. Those couples with actual difficulties in rural areas may give birth to a second child with planned spacing. Married couples who are both single children themselves may have two children if they wish.

Owing to the reasonable policy based upon the country's actual conditions, more and more married couples of child-bearing age have accepted family planning. In order to encourage one-child families, the government has adopted some incentive measures. All one-child families get one-child health care allowances. Preferential treatment is given to single-children and or their families in matters relating to admission to kindergartens and schools. They receive preferred access to medical services, employment and allocation of urban housing and of building lots in the countryside. Besides, in urban areas, one-child mothers can extend their maternity leave to 3-6 months on full pay without affecting their possible promotion in the same period of their leave.

Since the early-1970s, China has scored considerable achievements in controlling its population growth and in improving the quality of its population. In recent years, unremitting efforts have been made to promote hospitalized midwifery. Peri-natal care and

counselling services for healthy births and upbringing of children have been carried out to ensure the health of the mother and child.

The outstanding points are as follows:

1. There has been a great decrease in the birth rate, death rate and natural growth rate.

2. The fertility rate has notably decreased.

3. Most married couples at the reproductive age voluntarily adopt contraceptive measures and the average age for women's first marriage has raised.

4. Notable progress has been made in healthy births and in the upbringing of children, thereby further improving the quality of the population.

Conclusion

China is a developing country with a large population base. The country's population increased, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, without proper control on growth due to the traditional ideas of childbearing. The number of births may be expected to rise again in the next few years when the large baby boom of the 1960s reaches the age of marriage. Owing to the increase of population, agricultural land per person declined from approximately 0.18 hectares in 1949 to 0.10 hectares in 1983.⁶ Clearly such a trend

of dwindling man-land ratio cannot be sustained indefinitely. Controlling the size of the country's population has become an important and challenging task facing China.

END NOTES

1. Population Reference Bureau Inc., 1984 Population Data sheet.
2. During 1959 to 1961, food shortages occurred, due to a series of natural calamities throughout the nation-- floods in central and southern China, drought and insect damage in the north.
3. Huan-yong Hu, Essays on China's Population Distribution, Shanghai, East China Normal University Press, 1982.
4. United Nations, Demographic Yearbook, 1984, New York, 1986.
5. Bin Qiao and Datong Xu, "The Distribution of Women's Birth-Order Interval," Special Issue of the Renkou Yu Jingji, July 1983. (Chinese)
6. State Statistical Bureau, Statistical Yearbook of China. Beijing Chinese Statistics Publishing House, 1985.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

China is the world's most populous country. With more than one billion people, it accounts for about one-fifth of the world's population. Additionally, China's territory occupies approximately 3.7 million square miles, which is nearly one-fifteenth of the world's total land. Although China is a developing country, there are significant differences in the development of the nation's population as compared to other developing countries. No world summary of population trends is complete without the inclusion of China.

As a developing country, China has successfully controlled the increase of population. According to 1984 statistics, the natural rate of increase was 10.8 per thousand. Since the 1970s, in order to lower population growth, the Chinese government has practiced a family planning program. The Government has advocated a "one couple, one child" policy since 1979. However, it does not mean that every couple must have only one child. The 1985 statistics show that only about 20 percent of China's 190 million married couples of childbearing age have expressed a wish for one child families; nearly 20 percent of eligible couples currently have third and subsequent births. The family planning policy aims to control population numbers and to improve the quality (in terms of health and education)

as well so that population growth may be kept balance with socioeconomic development and commensurate with the utilization of natural resources and environmental protection. The number of births may rise again in the next few years when the large baby boom of the 1960s reaches the age of marriage.

The major feature in urban-rural composition is that the country is under-urbanized as compared to the developed and even many developing countries of the world. Urban places in China are successfully controlling their natural growth because they have many advantages over rural areas in education, occupational structure, health care, welfare for the elderly, communication networks, local leadership, and other amenities.

China is the most populous country in the world, yet the geographic distribution of this population is uneven. Ninety-four percent of the total population is concentrated in the southeastern part of country, an area with favorable natural conditions and well-developed industry. The population density declines from the east coast to the interior.

The uneven regional distribution has developed for hundreds of years. The pattern of uneven distribution is not easy to change in the short period, however, and migration of people in the large scale is not suitable for China.

The objective of this study has been to examine and analyze trends and geographic patterns of China's population. China's demographic features show the necessity and urgency for China to control its population growth.

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